

Stockholm syndrome

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Stockholm syndrome, or **capture–bonding**, is a psychological phenomenon in which hostages express empathy and sympathy and have positive feelings toward their captors, sometimes to the point of defending them. These feelings are generally considered irrational in light of the danger or risk endured by the victims, who essentially mistake a lack of abuse from their captors for an act of kindness.^{[1][2]} The FBI's Hostage Barricade Database System shows that roughly 27% of victims show evidence of Stockholm syndrome.^[3]

Stockholm syndrome can be seen as a form of **traumatic bonding**, which does not necessarily require a hostage scenario, but which describes “strong emotional ties that develop between two persons where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses, or intimidates the other.”^[4] One commonly used hypothesis to explain the effect of Stockholm syndrome is based on Freudian theory. It suggests that the bonding is the individual’s response to trauma in becoming a victim. Identifying with the aggressor is one way that the ego defends itself. When a victim believes the same values as the aggressor, they cease to be a threat.^[5]

Battered-person syndrome is an example of activating the capture–bonding psychological mechanism, as are military basic training and fraternity bonding by hazing.^{[6] [7][8]}

Stockholm syndrome is sometimes erroneously referred to as *Helsinki syndrome*.^{[9][10]}

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History

Stockholm syndrome is named after the Norrmalmstorg robbery of *Kreditbanken* at Norrmalmstorg in Stockholm, Sweden, in which several bank employees were held hostage in a bank vault from August 23 to August 28, 1973. During this situation, the victims became emotionally attached to their captors, rejected assistance from government officials at one point and even defended them after they were freed from their six-day ordeal.^[11] The term “Stockholm syndrome” was coined by the criminologist and psychiatrist Nils Bejerot, using the term in a news broadcast.^[12] It was originally defined by psychiatrist Frank Ochberg to aid the management of hostage situations.^[13]

Evolutionary explanations

In the view of evolutionary psychology, “the mind is a set of information-processing machines that were designed by natural selection to solve adaptive problems faced by our hunter–gatherer ancestors.”^[14]

One of the “adaptive problems faced by our hunter–gatherer ancestors,” particularly females, was being abducted by another band. Life in the human “environment of evolutionary adaptiveness” (EEA) is thought by researchers such as Azar Gat to be similar to that of the few remaining hunter-gatherer societies. “Deadly violence is also regularly activated in competition over women. . . . Abduction of women, rape, . . . are widespread direct causes of reproductive conflict. . . .”^[15] I.e., being captured^[16] and having their dependent children killed might have been fairly common.^[17] Women who resisted capture in such situations risked being killed.^[18]



Kreditbanken at Norrmalmstorg, Stockholm

Azar Gat argues that war and abductions (capture) were typical of human pre-history.^[15] When selection is intense and persistent, adaptive traits (such as capture–bonding) become universal to the population or species. (See Selection.)

Partial activation of the capture–bonding psychological trait may lie behind battered-wife syndrome, military basic training, fraternity hazing, and sex practices such as sadism/masochism or bondage/discipline.^[6] Being captured by neighboring tribes was a relatively common event for women in human history, if anything like the recent history of the few remaining primitive tribes. In some of those tribes (Yanomamo, for instance) practically everyone in the tribe is descended from a captive within the last three generations. Perhaps as high as one in ten of females were abducted and incorporated into the tribe that captured them.^[6]

In economics

In June 2012, at the 9th International Conference Developments in Economic Theory and Policy, in Bilbao, by the Department of Applied Economics V of the University of the Basque Country (Spain) and the Cambridge Centre for Economic and Public Policy, Department of Land Economy of the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), the concept of Stockholm syndrome was introduced in economics referring to governments that have been “kidnapped” by financial capital because of their need to refinance public debt. They are coerced into accepting high interest rates and conditions that compromise their sovereignty.^[citation needed]^[19]

Lima syndrome

An inverse of Stockholm syndrome called *Lima syndrome* has been proposed, in which abductors develop sympathy for their hostages. It was named after an abduction at the Japanese Embassy in Lima, Peru, in 1996, when members of a militant movement took hostage hundreds of people attending a party at the official residence of Japan’s ambassador. Within a few hours, the abductors had set free most of the hostages, including the most valuable ones, owing to sympathy.^[20]^[21]

See also

- Attachment theory
- Codependency
- Enmeshment
- Jerusalem syndrome
- Mind control
- Paris syndrome
- Symptoms of victimization
- Victimisation

Notes

1. ^ de Fabrique, Nathalie; Romano, Stephen J.; Vecchi, Gregory M.; van Hasselt, Vincent B. (July 2007). "Understanding Stockholm Syndrome" (http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2007-pdfs/july07leb.pdf/at_download/file). *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (Law Enforcement Communication Unit) **76** (7): 10–15. ISSN 0014-5688 (<http://www.worldcat.org/issn/0014-5688>). Retrieved 17 November 2010.
2. ^ "'Stockholm Syndrome': psychiatric diagnosis or urban myth?". *Acta Psychiatr Scand* (in London, UK.) (Royal Free and University College Medical School) **117** (1): 4–11. 2007 November 19. doi:10.1111/j.1600-0447.2007.01112.x (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1600-0447.2007.01112.x>). PMID 18028254 (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18028254>). More than one of `|work=` and `|journal=` specified (help)
3. ^ G. Dwayne Fuselier, "Placing the Stockholm Syndrome in Perspective". ..FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin... July 1999, 22-25.
4. ^ Dutton, D.G and Painter, S.L. (1981) Traumatic Bonding: the development of emotional attachments in battered women and other relationships of intermittent abuse. *Victimology: An International Journal*, 1(4), pp. 139-155
5. ^ Mackenzie, Ian K. (February 2004). "The Stockholm Syndrome Revisited: Hostages, Relationships, Prediction, Control and Psychological Science" (<http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/tmp/11009621295891804833.pdf>). *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations* **4** (1): 5–21. Retrieved December 9, 2012.
6. ^ ^a ^b ^c Henson, Keith (Summer 2006). "Evolutionary Psychology, Memes and the Origin of War" (<http://www.kuro5hin.org/story/2006/4/17/194059/296>). *Mankind Quarterly* (The Council for Social and Economic Studies) **46** (4).
7. ^ Traumatic entrapment, appeasement and complex posttraumatic stress disorder: evolutionary perspectives of hostage reactions, domestic abuse and the Stockholm Syndrome. (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17464728>)
8. ^ Psychology Behind Ragging © Harsh Agarwal, 2010 (<http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/AgarwalPsychologyBehindRagging.pdf>)
9. ^ Cherry, Andrew L. Jr. (2003). *Examining global social welfare issues: using MicroCase* (http://books.google.com/books?id=NEWISS17ESYC&q=helsinki#search_anchor). Brooks/Cole– Thomson Learning. p. 236. ISBN 0534610404.
10. ^ Mauk, John; Metz, John (2012). *Inventing arguments* (http://books.google.com/books/about/Inventing_Arguments.html?id=QSpO3I8zaSEC) (3rd ed.). Wadsworth Publishing. p. 566. ISBN 0840027761. Retrieved September 24, 2012.
11. ^ Fitzpatrick, Laura (August 31, 2009). "Stockholm Syndrome" (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1920301,00.html>) *Time*
12. ^ Nils Bejerot: The six day war in Stockholm New Scientist 1974, volume 61, number 886, page 486-487 (http://www.nilsbejerot.se/sexdagar_eng.htm)
13. ^ Ochberg, Frank "The Ties That Bind Captive to Captor" (<http://articles.latimes.com/2005/apr/08/opinion/oe-ochberg8>), *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 2005
14. ^ Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer (<http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/primer.html>) - Leda Cosmides & John Tooby
15. ^ ^a ^b Published in *Anthropological Quarterly*, 73.2 (2000), 74-88. THE HUMAN MOTIVATIONAL COMPLEX: EVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND THE CAUSES OF HUNTER-GATHERER FIGHTING Azar Gat Part II: Proximate, Subordinate, and Derivative Causes" (http://www.scribd.com/full/62772971?access_key=key-275ch4lkr2dftqnoi0nz)
16. ^ "The percentage of females in the lowland villages who have been abducted is significantly higher: 17% compared [with] 11.7% in the highland villages." (Napoleon Chagnon quoted at Sexual Polarization in Warrior Cultures (<http://www.dhushara.com/paradoxhtm/warrior.htm>))
17. ^ "Elena Valero, a Brazilian woman, was kidnapped by Yanomamo warriors when she was eleven years old. . . . But none were so horrifying as the second [raid]: 'They killed so many.' . . . The man then took the baby by his feet and

bashed him against the rocks. . . ." (Hrdy quoted in Sexual Polarization in Warrior Cultures (<http://www.dhushara.com/paradoxhtm/warrior.htm>))

18. ^ "The Shaur and Achuar Jivaros, once deadly enemies. . . . A significant goal of these wars was geared toward the annihilation of the enemy tribe, including women and children. . . . There were, however, many instances where the women and children were taken as prisoners A woman who fights, or a woman who refuses to accompany the victorious war-party to their homes and serve a new master, exposes herself to the risk of suffering the same fate as her men-folk." (Up de Graff also in Sexual Polarization in Warrior Cultures (<http://www.dhushara.com/paradoxhtm/warrior.htm>))
19. ^ "and non optimal currency areas and public debt"; paper by Carlos Encinas Ferrer.
20. ^ *PTSD* (<http://books.google.ca/books?id=FUOHCwnHFKUC&pg=PA149&dq=%22Lima+Syndrome%22>). Springer Science+Business Media. 2006. ISBN 4-431-29566-6.
21. ^ "Africa Politics" (<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-2527009.html>). *International Press Service*. July 10, 1996. Retrieved 2009-05-08.

References

- This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: de Fabrique, Nathalie; Romano, Stephen J.; Vecchi, Gregory M.; van Hasselt, Vincent B. (July 2007). "Understanding Stockholm Syndrome" (http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2007-pdfs/july07leb.pdf/at_download/file). *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (Law Enforcement Communication Unit) **76** (7): 10–15. ISSN 0014-5688 (<http://www.worldcat.org/issn/0014-5688>). Retrieved 17 November 2010.

External links

- 'Understanding Stockholm Syndrome' (<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2007-pdfs/july07leb.pdf>)(pdf, page 10), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Love and Stockholm Syndrome: The Mystery of Loving an Abuser (<http://counsellingresource.com/quizzes/stockholm/index.html>) Psychologist Dr Joseph Carver, writing at CounsellingResource.com
- Nils Bejerot's article about the events at Norrmalmstorg (http://www.nilsbejerot.se/sexdagar_eng.htm) [1] (<http://www.nilsbejerot.se/norrmalmstorg.htm>)
- "*Unbewußte Liebesbeziehung zum Folterer?*" Kritik und Alternativen zu einer "*Psychodynamik der traumatischen Reaktion*", von Freihart Regner (http://www.ai-aktionsnetz-heilberufe.de/texte/texte/sammelband_2000/Regner.pdf) (German)
- Why do kidnap victims sometimes fail to escape, even when they have a chance to run? (<http://everydaypsychology.com/2007/01/why-do-kidnap-victims-sometimes-fail-to.html>) at everydaypsychology.com
- The Relationship Between Stockholm Syndrome and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Battered Women (<http://studentpulse.com/articles/35/the-relationship-between-stockholm-Syndrome-and-posttraumatic-stress-disorder-in-battered-women>)
- A Brief History of Stockholm Syndrome (<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1919757,00.html>) from Time.com
- Stockholm Syndrome (<http://www.primehealthchannel.com/stockholm-Syndrome-causes-symptoms-cases-and-treatment.html>) Prime Health Channel

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